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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC 2513-81
29 April 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED]
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for NESA

SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Meeting - April 1981

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1. Lebanon: The escalation of tensions in Lebanon was the major focus of concern among community representatives. A review of the motives impelling the various combatants led to a gloomy forecast.

- Bashir Jumayyil's desire to expand Phalange positions and elicit greater military assistance from Israel and at least moral support from the US were seen as the most immediate causes of increased tensions. Bashir's designs are keyed to enhancing Phalange power in advance of presidential elections in mid-1982 and his recent moves on Zahlah would - if successful - change the fragile power balance in ways wholly unacceptable to the Syrians.
- The Syrians - as is their wont - have responded to Christian challenges with near overwhelming force and have extended their punishment to Phalange-controlled areas of Beirut. Although we see no signs and do not expect the Syrians to undertake a major offensive against the Christian heartland, the Syrians are likely to continue to apply punishing pressure, probably in concert with Franjiyah's forces in the North, along the perimeter of the Phalange stronghold until Bashir desists. The dangers in such a campaign are:

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- Bashir is in a mood to press his gamble that the Israelis will come to his assistance.
- The Israelis may perceive Syrian moves as seriously threatening their Christian allies and/or the Begin government may see dramatic assistance to the Christians as a way of enhancing its re-election prospects.
- The Israelis face complicating factors in the south. The Palestinians now have artillery with ranges that make the UN buffer zone nearly useless. Moreover, the Israel strategy of intensifying attacks of Palestinian bases in the south is becoming less and less effective in deterring cross border terrorist attacks. More direct pressure on the Syrians may be viewed as a way to force Damascus to reign in its Palestinian allies. [REDACTED]

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2. Iraq-Iran: The possibility of Iraq launching a spring offensive was judged to be receding. Certainly the weight of recent information indicates that the liabilities of such operations are in the forefront of thinking within the Iraqi military establishment. Saddam Hussein's inclination toward a political rather than a military solution makes it somewhat more difficult to divine his intentions, although it presumably is obvious to him that the political costs of a less than successful offensive will be high. It was also noted that Syria's apparent assistance to Iran in its staging of an air attack on key Iraqi targets might be a disincentive in Baghdad's consideration of the offense option. Representatives continue to rate the prospects of the two sides exchanging air strikes on important military and economic targets as high. [REDACTED]

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3. India-Pakistan: It was agreed that the NESAW group would discuss the political and military consequences of recent technical changes in these countries' nuclear development programs at our next meeting. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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NIC/A/NIO/NESA [REDACTED] 29 Apr. 81 [REDACTED]

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